

LINDSAY NIEGELBERG

Scott Lamlein, music director, plays the organ in the Wesley Methodist Church. He said the famed Skinner organ was one of the things that attracted him to the job in Worcester.

# Divine sound

## City organists pull out all the stops

By Kathleen A. Shaw  
TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

WORCESTER — The city's churches reflect a variety of denominations, but one thing the larger congregations have in common is that they have active music programs and superb organs.

Scott Lamlein of Connecticut decided to take the job as music director at Wesley United Methodist Church partly because

of the church's Skinner organ, which he said is a dream to play.

But learning to meld traditional music into the church's growing diverse and multicultural membership added another challenge. A native of Holyoke, Mr. Lamlein lives in Bristol, Conn., and commutes to Worcester. Besides directing the music program, he is revitalizing and updating Wesley's long history of good music.

By coming to Worcester, Mr.

Lamlein, a graduate of the Hartt School of Music, Hartford, is the latest of a series of ambitious church organists providing quality music — often free of charge or at inexpensive prices — to area music fans.

One of his first acts as director of music ministries was to begin a monthly series of organ concerts the first Sunday of the month. The

# Speed danger hits ice, snow

## Snowmobiling death fears grow

By Matthew Bruun  
TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

David J. Prentiss was talking to a friend when he was struck by a snowmobile nine days ago.

He was standing on Lake Shirley in Lunenburg Jan. 28, talking with a fellow rider, about 7:15 p.m. The riders had gotten off their snowmobiles when another snowmobile, traveling an estimated 40 mph, smashed into his left side. The impact threw him 20 feet, witnesses said.

"It all happened so fast," Mr. Prentiss said Friday from his room at the UMass Memorial Medical Center — University Campus, Worcester, where he had been taken by helicopter after Lunenburg rescue workers took him off the frozen lake in the dark.

"My friend and I were talking. We were occupied," Mr. Prentiss said.

He was standing about 100 feet from shore when he was hit. The rider who struck him — a co-worker at a Leominster fiber-board manufacturer — was charged with driving negligently and driving an unregistered snowmobile.

Mr. Prentiss, 42, is a veteran rider, having driven snowmobiles since he was a boy, he said. But he said it was unusual for him to be snowmobiling in his native Lunenburg.

"I mostly do my snowmobiling in Vermont," he said. "Every once in a while I go around here. I should have stayed home that night."

Over the next six days, Mr. Prentiss underwent three surgeries to repair his broken leg, the most serious of his injuries from the crash. He said he expects six to eight months of rehabilitation to follow his discharge from the hospital this week.

The night after Mr. Prentiss was struck, 200 miles away in northern New Hampshire, another Massachusetts resident was hit by a snowmobile. Dagny A. Collins, 25, a library assistant from Haverhill, had been riding with her boyfriend on First Connecticut Lake in Pittsburg, N.H.

Ms. Collins' boyfriend and a companion wanted to race on the lake, police said, but she did not want to join them. She got off the snowmobile and began to walk toward shore, about half a mile away.



ED COLLIER

On his snowmobile, Bob Rudy of Worcester speeds across snow-packed Indian Lake just as the sun begins to set on Wednesday evening.



# Organists in the limelight

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half-hour concerts, called "The Pipes Alive" and set for 12:15 p.m., after regular worship, have been well-attended — even the first one, held during New Year's weekend, when many people were away, he said.

"Wesley has a long history of quality music," he said. While traditional music and hymns are important, he said, he wants eventually to add some jazz influences and bring in some more diverse kinds of music. He'd like to hold four or five full-length concerts a year, to be held on Friday nights or Sunday afternoons, and bring in outside orchestras and musicians.

The organ is the work of Ernest M. Skinner, whose instruments are in some of the finest churches and music venues in the country. Mr. Lamlein said Skinner intended to develop an organ that could recreate the sounds of an orchestra. Using the organ's four keyboards, Mr. Lamlein said, he is doing his best to recreate an orchestra.

"The organ has a broad spectrum of sounds and drama," he said.

The Rev. Vicki Woods, senior pastor, said more than 20 flags hang in the church's hall to represent the ethnic origins of Wesley members. The congregation has welcomed a number of people from Ghana and other African countries, which is going to bring about some change in music and worship as the whole congregation works to become multicultural, she said. Mr. Lamlein meets regularly with Thomas Ofori, who directs the Ghanaian Choir. They are trying to find ways they can mix the traditional worship music with the new African music and rhythms.

Besides playing the organ, Mr. Lamlein directs three choirs: the adult choir, the Wesley Ringers and the Young Spirit Choir for junior high school and higher school students. Leslie McBrayer directs two young children's choirs for kids in kinder-

garten through Grade 2, and another for those in Grades 3-6.

Peter Stoltzfus Berton, music director at All Saints Church, started a trend last October when he sponsored a Halloween event in the church. The silent film "Phantom of the Opera" was shown while an organist played the accompanying music. The event was well-attended, and Mr. Stoltzfus Berton expects to offer similar programs in the future. All Saints also has a Skinner organ.

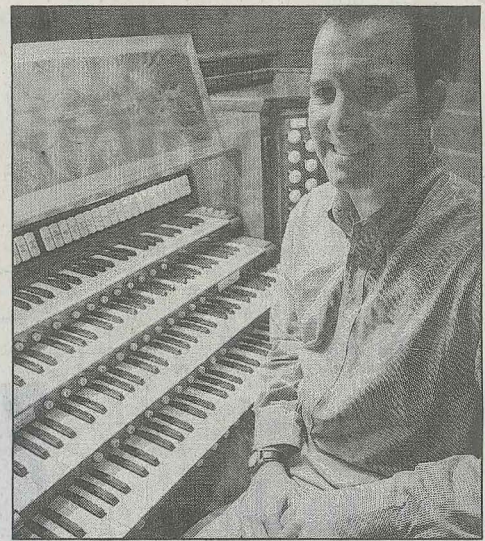
Mr. Stoltzfus Berton, a graduate of University of Michigan and Yale School of Music, has directed music at All Saints for the past year. He also directs the church's three choirs — adults, boys and girls. The All Saints choir program for young people dates to the 19th century, and is seen to be a pioneer in American choir music using young people, Mr. Stoltzfus Berton said.

All Saints offers many musical events during the year and is gearing up for its annual Lenten organ recital series. Concerts by a variety of organists are held at 5 p.m. Sundays during Lent.

Worcester has good music programs, Mr. Stoltzfus Berton said, because it was once a wealthy city with the resources to invest in organs and church music. The organ was popular in New England. It was also more affordable than orchestras — providing good, inexpensive music, culture and entertainment, he said.

William Ness, music director at First Baptist Church, noted that the organ is found in most Western Christian churches, but not in Eastern Orthodox churches or in most forms of Judaism or Islam. He said organs first became popular in Holland, where churches served as meetinghouses and the organist was employed by the community. Organ music was provided before and after worship services, he said.

Organ music became popular in churches by the late 18th century and came to this country with the immigrants. Mr. Ness said



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Besides directing the music program, Scott Lamlein is updating the long history of good music at Wesley Methodist Church.

classical Western music traditions developed within the churches, which for a century set the standard for culture in the West. The churches shared responsibility for contributing to music, arts and the gospel.

Mr. Ness, who came to First Baptist four years ago from the College Church in South Lancaster, said the Park Avenue church has a great organ called the "Theodore Gilbert." The organ started as a Reuter, but 30 years of renovation by Theodore Gilbert made it into another instrument.

Mr. Ness also directs the adult choir, two children's choirs and three bell ringing groups.

Music in the Arts Week at First Baptist will open at 3 p.m. April 10 with the Boston Symphony Chamber group. A one-woman play on the life of Elizabeth Blackwell, the country's first female doctor, is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. April 15, and soloist Maria Ferrante will present a concert at 3 p.m. April 17 with Thomas Dickinson as guest pianist.